

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY – SATURDAY, 9TH AUGUST, 2025

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Good morning.

An alarming story about microplastics caught my attention this week. Barely visible to the naked eye, these tiny particles have been found in all our bodily organs, even the brain. Once hailed as a miracle of scientific ingenuity, plastic has become an insidious threat to many life forms, including our own. As we face the new challenges posed by artificial intelligence, these are timely reminders that the most brilliant human inventions can be blighted by unintended consequences.

It's easy to feel a sense of despair, as the modern myth of progress implodes around us in the media's daily delivery of bad news. It can be tempting to switch off or seek relief in escapism. This includes a burgeoning industry of commodified spiritualities and lifestyle movements, with the seductive promise of finding peace of mind amidst these turbulent times, often with some significant cost involved.

A mature Christian spirituality doesn't offer such a way out. It's not about escapism but about finding hope within the often brutal and tragic realities of life. The story of Jesus confronts us with terrible cruelties and betrayals. When I was a child, my parents taught me to pray every night to gentle Jesus, meek and mild, but that's not the Jesus of the Gospels. Jesus wept. He raged against the moneylenders in the temple. He had a robust capacity to mock the hypocrisies of religious bigots, as present in our own time as they were in his. He looked tenderly on the foibles and failings of everyday life, but he was harsh in his condemnation of those who exploited and oppressed others.

I believe that it's right to respond to the daily news with grief and rage, to be unreconciled to the state of the world as it is. Christians are called to discover hope not in progressive optimism nor in spiritual escapism, but in the promise that, in spite of everything, there is meaning and purpose to our stumbling journey through time's labyrinth. The ultimate horizon is redemption, not futility.

Anger can be holy, and tears can water the sacred ground where new life might grow. I echo singer-songwriter Nick Cave's sentiment when he says I'm religious, not spiritual. My struggling faith offers me little by way of spiritual serenity, far less theological certainty, but I draw hope from believing that in Christ, divine life is woven into the fabric of time and space in the form of one vulnerable, mortal, and persecuted human, in whom was embodied an unquenchable love.